

GENDER STEREOTYPES AND LABOUR SEGREGATION IN DENTAL OFFICES

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Abstract

Ensuring the gender equality is one of the most important element for the formation of developed society. The aim of the research represented the study of factors acting on the processes of the gender socialization in dentists, the estimation of self-perception or denial of gender inequality by dentists, the manifestation, description and analysis of gender stereotypes and the study of gender characteristics, such as the gender identity, mood and behavior of involved subjects. The number of respondents were 179 dentist. There were used both qualitative and quantitative methods of research. The research confirms that the gender stereotypes, existent in specialists, cause division of dentistry in “women” and “men” specializations. The basis of the above-mentioned relation is common stereotypical opinions such as: Woman is more delicate, therapeutic dentistry does not demand hard work, there are needed thin and small fingers in dental therapy; Man is strong, smarter and calmer, he can risk and make a decision and so on. According to the results of this research, we can mention, that women dentists have stronger stereotypical opinions, than men dentists do. However, 100% of men dentists think, that dental surgeon must be a man and 100% of them think that it is better a man to be a head of clinic. Mostly men dentists work at full time jobs, they get married and have higher income than women dentists do. Most of the women dentists think that housework (husband, children) effects their professional growth. The gender stereotypes are widely spread and it has negative influence on both sex students and residents when choosing narrow specialties. General stereotypes that “create” the social roles for men and women influence the working load of dentists; women dentists choose therapeutic and pediatric dentistry, hence they have less working hours and accordingly lower compensation.

Keywords: Dentistry, Gender socialization; Gender identity; Stereotypes; Social comparison

Introduction

Gender stereotypes and gender discrimination are directly related. Gender stereotype is one of the methodologies of sexism and it is the basis of unequal separation of work.

We have to look for the factors making the neutral gender system unequal, not only into the system, but also in a broad social-cultural context. Olga Voronina, the researcher of the gender field, thinks that the modern theory of gender does not call the differences between men and women in question and that there is interesting not the fact of difference itself, but their socio-cultural interpretation and also how the background of these differences builds power systems [2].

The gender stereotypes in dentistry and not only in this field can have negative influence on man/woman self-realization, it can inhibit their individual development and free choice. The hypothesis of the above mentioned research can be stated as: The presence of gender stereotypes in specialists cause the dentistry to be divided into “man” and “woman” specialties, it endangers collegiality between the doctors and also the self-assessment by dentists, it has the negative influence on the work compensation and creates the basis of discrimination.

This research does not have the analogue in Georgia. Self-administrated questionnaire, the research instrument is made especially for this research and is completed by semi-structured questions. According to the content of the research there are used both quantitative and qualitative methods. These methods gave us the ability to see this phenomena in a different aspect and also they provided completed approach. We studied and analyzed Georgian and international law and documentation.

The research was made in Tbilisi and regions, according to the planned frame of chosen respondents in 2013-15 years.

The universe of target groups are considered 5988 dentists licensed in Georgia in 2010 y. and 820 residency students (the maximal quota of seekers of Georgian residency bases); selective totality was composed with 600 dentist (residency students and licensed dentists), that represents 9% of the universe. In sum total there were processed 179 questionnaires, so the number of respondents was 179.

The working relationships in the field of dentistry is specific in Georgia. In some cases it is not regulated by active working laws.

The compensation

In the field of dentistry we meet several types of compensation of the employed.

1. Compensation according to the performed work. This form of compensation is most common in Georgian dental clinics. As a rule, the dentist's monthly income represents certain percent of the sum, paid by the patient. The number of percent depends on the clinic, clinic's price-list, the dentist's length of service, the narrow specialty of dentist (for ex: the highest percent from 50 to 70 % goes to the orthodontists. Dental therapists take 25-35%)

2. Fixed compensation. We don't actually meet this kind of working relationship in Georgia. It was spread in the dental clinics belonging to the insurance companies and also in chain dental clinics. The system didn't work effectively because of several reasons:

- In the case of fixed compensation, the motivation of dentists was low to make the patient satisfied, because more satisfied patients didn't mean more compensation.
- There was time limit for the dentist per-patient visit. Theoretically, as they were demotivated, they could artificially lengthen time of patients' visit and process of treatment to receive less patients. However this rule limited the dentist ability to help the patient adequately, to do appropriate treatment procedures routinely as well as in the case of medical complications.
- Because of these and other reasons, because of the increasing number of dissatisfied workers and consumers as well, the great number of clinics using the above mentioned system were shut or their compensation system was changed.

3. Working on the basis of the lease. After the employer and employed the working relationship implies the owner of dental clinic, who offers the hired dental surgery or dental chair in exchange for certain compensation. In this case clinic's routine and politics doesn't extend on the hired. The hired, pays the fee of the lease periodically according to the agreement. He/she works with his/her own materials and instruments and makes the cost of manipulations himself/herself. The owner of the earned sum is just a dentist.

The leave

According to the specificity of compensation system we can say that there doesn't actually exist idea of the compensated leave in the field of dentistry. Because, except of the conditions of fixed compensation, in conditions of any other types of working relationships the employer is free of obligation, because each employed earns his/her compensation himself/herself. We can tell that in conditions of organizational adjustments,

working relationship does not always mean the job of the employed done for the employer in the exchange of compensation in Dental clinics.

According to Georgian labour code, if the employed is pregnant, has delivered recently or takes care of her baby the compensated leave covers 126 calendar days for her and if there is complicated or twin delivery-140 calendar days are covered. The above mentioned obligations do not regard to the heads of dental clinics. In this case women have special problems of course.

In case of the fixed compensation, men have special problems connected to the maternal leave. Because there exists the issue of realization of this right and collision of the norm by a man, that is present between the note of the labour code and the order, #231/n 2006 y, of Georgian minister of labour, health and social defense about confirmation of “the rule of leave because of the pregnancy, delivery and baby care, also adopting baby”. 27th article of Georgian labour code forms the right of leave of employed in case of pregnancy, delivery or taking care of a baby, where there is not defined a concrete sex of the subject. Employed is considered either man or woman, however there is mentioned in the 6th paragraph of 10th article of the rule confirmed by the order, that the leave and accordingly the compensation won't be given to other family member of woman in case of her pregnancy, delivery and taking care of her baby except if mother is departed, in this case her compensation will be given to baby's father or other guardian. This note makes illegal discrimination of a man due to his sex and opposes the demands of the organic law (Georgian labour code) [5].

The basis of discrimination

According to Georgian labour code, making the conditions that directly or indirectly worsens somebody's state compared to other person's in an analogous conditions is considered as discrimination. In dentistry clinics (and not only) it is common practice that one dentist, because of his/her working experience and/or academic degree, is in privileged state compared to other dentists employed on the same position. As a rule this kind of dentist gets much higher compensation (percent), makes his/her working schedule himself/herself and her price-list differs from the clinic's principal price-list.

The women employed in dental clinics have to work in an unequal working environment. The researches held in The United States confirm, that more men work at full-time jobs than women. The income of women dentists is 22% lower compared to the opposite sex income. Men work more hours and work part time less frequently; they work more than 42 hours per week more frequently. Older dentists work fewer hours, with a larger impact of age seen among men. Having children has a significantly greater effect on

the number of hours work per week among female dentists than among male dentists [2], [3], [5].

Concretely in Washington state:

- Women dentists work 10% lesser days, treat 10% lesser patients and carry out 10% lesser procedures annually compared to men dentists.
- The income of women dentists is 10% lower than the men dentists.
- Also, 50% of women dentists work two or three days per week, because of their kids [3].

The above mentioned problem is connected to the stereotypical relationships. The narrow specialties are divided into “men” and “women” professions and this point of view is common in dentists as well. According to the results of research 42% of Georgian dentists think that, the surgeon must only be a man and much more-51% consider that dental implantation must be done by a man surgeon. 51% of respondents think that, pediatric dentist must only be a woman.

The issue of choosing narrow specialty is one of the factors influencing the lower compensation of women dentists. Because surgery, that is considered as a “men’s work” and most of the surgeons are man, is much more gainful than therapeutic and pediatric dentistry considered as a “women’s work”.

In addition, 44% of women dentists mention, that housework (husband, kids and so on) has negative influence on increasing career. Great number of married women dentists are moved to part-time jobs by the employers because of the probability of being late, absence and other potential problems due to housework. The researches confirm that there are not this kind of problems in relation to men dentists.

The heads of dental clinics (employers) refrain to employ young women dentists, because pregnancy and being mother of newborn are the issues that makes the employer negatively minded when selecting the worker.

The spread of stereotypical relations between dentists having different specialties is also important. for example, 100% of respondent pediatric dentists consider that it’s better a woman dentist to work for kids and 71.4% think that the dental surgeon must be a man. 60% of surgeons share the same opinion. 60.4% of dental therapists, surgeons, implantologists and orthodontists agree that dentist of any sex can be an implantologist. 65% of orthopedists think that it is just a “man’s work”. 56% of dental therapists consider that, pediatric dentist should be a woman.

Dental implantologists, who work with prosthodontists, think that prosthodontist should be the men (51%). It was found that orthodontia is also stereotypical-100% of dental implantologists and 51% of prostodontists think that, only a man must be an orthodontist.

According to the results of research, the division of field of dentistry into “men” and “women” professions is widely spread in dentistry society as well. 26% of respondents mention that they have got familiar with this kind of differentiation by friend dentists, 17% -at university.

Conclusion

More traditional the society stronger the role of the gender stereotype, where there is strictly defined the features of men and women and their roles and considered as opposite to each other. For example, our researches manifested several gender stereotypes: “man is smarter”, “woman is more delicate”, “the men are preferred”, “it’s more difficult for woman to obtain the confidence of a patient”, “woman is more humane and patient”, “man is strong”, “woman will be a good pediatric dentist because of her maternal instinct”, “dental therapy needs thin fingers” and so on.

According to the results of this research it is clear that the gender stereotypes widely spread in dentistry society has negative influence on both sex students and residency students when choosing narrow specialties. Conformably in the low-compensated fields of dentistry-therapeutic and pediatric dentistry-mainly women are present, as for the dental surgery, oral and maxillofacial surgery and prosthetic dentistry men are preferred for these fields.

The fact that there are just several implantologist women in Georgia confirms that there is really negative and strong influence of the division of dentistry into “man” and “woman” specialties.

In addition general stereotypes that “form” the social roles for man and woman influence the working load of dentists, that is expressed in lesser working hours and hence lower compensation for women dentists.

According to the results of research pediatric dentistry is especially stereotypical and stereotypical relations, that somehow defines the woman role in dentistry is more common among women.

Despite of the government’s lot positive steps for the formation of gender sensitive law for last several years and despite of that the nongovernmental sector is also active the level of education is low in Georgian population. The solution of this problem will stay in a perspective for a lot years, if there aren’t changes in educational system.

The most fundamental thing that should happen is to change the population’s relation to equality. Changing the relation is difficult and long-lasting process, it demands a lot effort, including governmental politics, the law, increasing the educational level of society, purposeful actions of governmental and nongovernmental institutions.

One of the important issues for the reduction of problem, is to ensure the gender equity in the educational system. Taking in view the fact that the

formation of children's opinions happens at home and at school, there should be paid a special attention on the gender equity at school. The school teachers should get training for increasing gender sensitivity. And it should be continuous on every step of education at universities and studying modules should be rechecked.

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